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MR. CANNING AT SCHOOL.

LETTER IV.

Worth, Sussex, 10 Dec. 1822.

SIR,

THE agreeable news from France, relative to the intended invasion of Spain, compelled me to break off, in my last Letter, in the middle of my *Rural Ride* of Sunday, the 24th of November. Before I mount again, which I shall do in this Letter, pray, let me ask you what *sort of apology* is to be offered to the nation, if the French Bourbons be permitted to take quiet possession of Cadiz and of the Spanish naval force? Perhaps you may be disposed to answer, when you have taken time to reflect; and, therefore, leaving you to muse on the matter, I will resume my Ride.

Nov. 24. (Sunday.) From Hambledon to Thursley (continued.)—From East-Meon I did

not go on to *Froxfield* church, but turned off to the left to a place (a couple of houses) called *Bower*. Near this I stopped at a friend's house, which is in about as lonely a situation as I ever saw. A very pleasant place however. The lands dry, a nice mixture of woods and fields, and a great variety of hill and dell.—Before I came to East-Meon, the soil of the hills was a shallow loam with flints, on a bottom of chalk; but, on this side the valley of East-Meon; that is to say, on the north side, the soil on the hills is a deep, stiff loam, on a bed of a sort of *gravel mixed with chalk*; and the stones, instead of being grey on the outside and blue on the inside, are yellow on the outside and whitish on the inside. In coming on further to the North, I found, that the bottom was sometimes *gravel* and sometimes *chalk*. Here, at the time when *whatever it was* that formed these hills and valleys, the stuff of which *Hindhead* is composed seems to have run down and mixed itself with the stuff of which *Old Winchester*

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Hill is composed.—Free-chalk (which is the sort found here) is excellent manure for *stiff land*, and it produces a complete change in the nature of *clays*. It is, therefore, dug here, on the North of East-Meon, about in the fields, where it happens to be found, and is laid out upon the surface, where it is crumbled to powder by the frost, and thus gets incorporated with the loam.—At *Bower* I got instructions to go to *Hawkley*, but accompanied with most earnest advice *not to go that way*, for that it was *impossible to get along*. The roads were represented as so bad; the floods so much out; the hills and bogs so dangerous, that, really, I began to *doubt*; and, if I had not been brought up amongst the clays of the Holt Forest and the bogs of the neighbouring heaths, I should certainly have turned off to my right, to go over Hindhead, great as was my objection to going that way. “Well, then,” said my friend at Bower, “If you *will* go that way, “by G—, you must go down “*Hawkley Hanger*;” of which he then gave me such a description! But, even this I found to fall short of the reality.—I inquired simply, whether *people were in the habit* of going down it; and, the answer being in the

affirmative, on I went, through green-lanes and bridle-ways till I came to the turnpike-road from Petersfield to Winchester, which I crossed, going into a narrow and almost untrodden green-lane, on the side of which I found a cottage. Upon my asking the way to *Hawkley*, the woman at the cottage said, “Right up the lane, Sir: you’ll come to a “*hanger* presently: you must “*take care*, Sir: you can’t *ride* “down: will your horses *go alone*?”—On we trotted up this pretty green lane; and indeed, we had been coming gently and generally *up hill* for a good while. The lane was between highish banks and pretty high stuff growing on the banks, so that we could see no distance from us, and could receive not the smallest hint of what was so near at hand. The lane had a little turn towards the end; so that, out we came, all in a moment, upon the very *edge of the hanger*! And never, in all my life, was I so surprised and so delighted! I pulled up my horse, and sat and looked; and it was like looking from the top of a castle down into the sea, except that the valley was land and not water. I looked at my servant to see what effect this unexpected sight had upon him. His sur-

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prise was as great as mine, though he has been bred amongst the North Hampshire hills.—Those who had so strenuously dwelt on the dirt and dangers of this route, had said not a word about the beauties, the matchless beauties of the scenery. These hangers are *woods* on the sides of *very steep hills*. The trees and underwood *hang*, in some sort, to the ground, instead of *standing on* it. Hence these places are called *Hangers*. From the summit of that which I had now to descend, I looked down upon the villages of *Hawley*, *Greatham*, *Selburne* and some others. From the south-east, round, southward, to the north-west, the main valley has cross-valleys running out of it, the hills on the sides of which are *very steep*, and, in many parts, covered with wood. The hills that form these cross-valleys *run out* into the main valley, like *piers* into the sea. Two of these promontories, of great height, are on the west side of the main valley, and were the first objects that struck my sight when I came to the edge of the hanger, which was on the south. The ends of these promontories are nearly perpendicular, and their tops so high in the air, that you cannot look at the village below without something like a feeling of apprehension.

—The leaves are all off, the hop-poles are in stack, the fields have little verdure; but, while the spot is beautiful beyond description even now, I must leave to imagination to suppose what it is, when the trees and hangers and hedges are in leaf, the corn waving, the meadows bright, and the hops upon the poles!—From the south-west, round, eastward, to the north, lie the *heaths*, of which Woolmer Forest makes a part, and these go gradually rising up to Hindhead, the crown of which is to the north-west, leaving the rest of the circle (the part from north to north-west) to be occupied by a continuation of the valley towards Headley, Binstead, Frensham and the Holt Forest.

—So that even the *contrast* in the view from the top of the hanger is as great as can possibly be imagined.—Men, however, are not to have such beautiful views as this without some *trouble*. We had had the view; but we had to *go down the hanger*. We had, indeed, some *roads* to get along, as we could, afterwards; but, we had to get down the hanger *first*.—The horses took the lead, and crept down partly upon their feet and partly upon their *hocks*. It was extremely slippery too; for the soil is a sort of *marle*, or, as

they call it here, *maume*, or *mame*, which is, when wet, very much like *grey soap*.—In such a case it was likely that I should keep in the *rear*, which I did, and I descended by taking hold of the branches of the underwood, and so *letting myself down*. When we got to the bottom, I bid my man, when he should go back to *Uphusband*, tell the people there, that *Ashmansworth Lane* is not the *worst* piece of road in the world.—Our worst, however, was not come yet, nor had we by any means seen the most novel sights. After crossing a little field and going through a farm-yard, we came into a lane, which was, at once, *road* and *river*. We found a hard bottom, however; and, when we got out of the water, we got into a lane with high banks. The banks were quarries of *white stone*, like *Portland-stone*, and the bed of the road was of the *same stone*; and, the rains having been heavy for a day or two before, the whole was as clean and as white as the steps of a fundholder or dead-weight doorway in one of the Squares of the *Wen*. Here were we, then, going along a stone road with stone banks, and yet the underwood and trees grew well upon the tops of the banks. In the solid

stone beneath us, there was a *horse-track* and *wheel-tracks*, the former about three and the latter about six inches deep. How many many ages it must have taken the horses' feet, the wheels, and the water, to wear down this stone, so as to form a *hollow way*! The horses seemed alarmed at their situation; they trod with fear; but they took us along very nicely, and, at last, got us safe into the indescribable dirt and mire of the road from *Hawkley Green* to *Greatham*.—Here the bottom of all the land is this *solid white stone*, and the top is that *mame*, which I have before described. The *hop-roots* penetrate down into this stone. How *deep* the stone may go I know not; but, when I came to look up at the *end* of one of the *piers*, or *promontories*, mentioned above, I found that it was all of this same stone.—At *Hawkley Green*, I asked a farmer the way to *Thursley*. He pointed to one of two roads going from the green; but, it appearing to me, that that would lead me up to the London road and over *Hindhead*, I gave him to understand, that I was resolved to get along, some how or other, through the "*low countries*." He besought me not to think of it. However, finding me resolved, he got a man

to go a little way to put me into the *Greatham-road*. The man came, but the farmer could not let me go off without renewing his entreaties, that I would go away to *Liphook*, in which entreaties the man joined, though he was to be paid very well for his trouble.—Off we went, however, to *Greatham*.—I am thinking, whether I ever did see *worse* roads. Upon the whole, I think, I have ; though I am not *sure* that the roads of *New Jersey*, between *Trenton* and *Elizabeth-Town*, at the breaking up of winter, be worse. Talk of *shows*, indeed! Take a piece of this road ; just a cut across, and a rod long, and carry it up to *London*. That would be something like a *show*! —Upon leaving *Greatham*, we came out upon *Woolmer Forest*. Just as we were coming out of *Greatham*, I asked a man the way to *Thursley*. “ You must go to *Liphook*, Sir,” said he. “ But,” I said, “ I will not go to *Liphook*.” —These people seemed to be posted at all these stages to turn me aside from my purpose, and to make me go over that *Hindhead*, which I had resolved to avoid.—I went on a little further, and asked another man the way to *Headley*, which, as I have already observed, lies on the Western foot

of *Hindhead*, whence I knew there must be a road to *Thursley* (which lies at the North East foot) without going *over* that miserable hill. The man told me, that I must go across the *forest*. I asked him whether it was a *good* road : “ it is a *sound* road,” said he, laying a weighty emphasis upon the word *sound*. “ Do people *go* it ? ” said I. “ *Ye-es*,” said he. “ Oh then,” said I, to my man, “ as it is a *sound* road, keep you *close to my heels*, “ and do not attempt to go aside, “ not even for a foot.” —Indeed it was a *sound* road. The rain of the night had made the *fresh horse tracks* visible. And we got to *Headley* in a short time, over a sand-road, which seemed so delightful after the flints and stone and dirt and sloughs that we had passed over and through since the morning! This road was not, if we had been benighted, without its dangers, the forest being full of *quags* and *quicksands*. This is a tract of Crown-lands, or, properly speaking, *public-lands*, on some parts of which our *Land Steward*, Mr. *Huskisson*, is making some *plantations of trees*, partly *fir*, and partly other trees. What he can plant the *fir* for, God only knows, seeing that the country is already overstocked with that rubish.—But, this *public-land* con-

cern is a very great concern. If I were a Member of Parliament, I would know what timber has been cut down, and what it has been sold for, since the year 1790. However, this matter must be *investigated*, first or last. It never can be omitted in the winding up of the concern; and that winding up must come out of wheat at four shillings a bushel. It is said, hereabouts, that a man who lives near Liphook, and who is so mighty a hunter and game-pursuer, that they call him *William Rufus*; it is said that this man is *Lord of the Manor of Woolmer Forest*. This he cannot be without a *grant* to that effect; and, if there be a grant, there must have been a *reason* for the grant. This *reason* I should very much like to know; and this I would know if I were a Member of Parliament. That the people call him the *Lord of the Manor* is certain; but he can hardly make *preserves of the plantations*; for it is well known how marvellously *hares* and *young trees* agree together! — This is a matter of great public importance; and yet, how, in the present state of things, is an *investigation* to be obtained? Is there a man in Parliament that will call for it? *Not one.* Would a dissolution of Parliament mend the

matter. No: for the *same men* would be there still. They are the *same men* that have been there for these *thirty years*; and the *same men* they will be, and they *must be*, until there be a *reform*. To be sure when one dies, or cuts his throat (as in the case of *Castlereagh*), another *one* comes; but, it is the *same body*. And, as long as it is that same body, things will always go on as they now go on. However, as Mr. Canning says the body "*works well*," we must not say the contrary.—The soil of this tract is, generally, a *black sand*, which, in some places, becomes *peat*, which makes very tolerable fuel. In some parts there is *clay* at bottom; and there the *oaks* would grow; but not while there are *hares* in any number on the forest. If trees be to grow here, there ought to be no *hares*, and as little hunting as possible.—We got to Headley, the sign of the Holly-Bush, just at dusk, and just as it began to rain. I had neither eaten nor drunk since eight o'clock in the morning; and as it was a nice little public-house, I at first intended to stay all night, an intention that I afterwards very indiscreetly gave up. I had *laid my plan*, which included the getting to Thursley that night. When, therefore, I had got some cold

bacon and bread, and some milk, I began to feel ashamed of stopping short of my *plan*, especially after having so heroically persevered in the "stern path," and so disdainfully scorned to go over Hindhead. I knew that my road lay through a hamlet called *Churt*, where they grow such fine *bennet-grass* seed. There was a *Moon*; but there was also a *hazy rain*. I had heaths to go over, and I might go into quags. Wishing to execute my plan, however, I, at last, brought myself to quit a very comfortable turf-fire, and to set off in the rain, having bargained to give a man three shillings to guide me out to the Northern *foot of Hindhead*. I took care to ascertain, that my guide *knew the road perfectly well*; that is to say, I took care to ascertain it as far as I could, which was, indeed, no farther than his word would go.—Off we set, the guide mounted on his own or master's horse, and with a white smock frock, which enabled us to see him clearly. We trotted on pretty fast for about half an hour; and I perceived, not without some surprise, that the rain, which I knew to be coming from the *South*, met me full in the face, when it ought, according to my reckoning, to have beat upon

my right cheek. I called to the guide repeatedly to ask him if he was *sure that he was right*, to which he always answered "Oh! yes, Sir, I know the road." I did not like this, "*I know the road*." At last, after going about six miles in nearly a Southern direction, the guide turned short to the left. That brought the rain upon my right cheek, and, though I could not very well account for the long stretch to the South, I thought, that, at any rate, we were *now* in the right track; and, after going about a mile in this new direction, I began to ask the guide *how much further we had to go*; for, I had got a pretty good soaking, and was rather impatient to see the foot of Hindhead. Just at this time, in raising my head and looking forward as I spoke to the guide, what should I see, but a long, high, and steep *hanger* arising before us, the trees along the top of which I could easily distinguish! The fact was, we were just getting to the outside of the heath, and were on the brow of a steep hill, which faced this hanging wood. The guide had begun to descend; and I had called to him to stop; for the hill was so steep, that, rain as it did and wet as my saddle must be, I got off my horse in order to walk

down. But, now behold, the fellow discovered, that he *had lost his way!*—Where we were I could not even *guess*. There was but one remedy, and that was to *get back* if we could. I became guide now; and did as Mr. Western is advising the Ministers to do, *retraced* my steps. We went back about half the way that we had come, when we saw two men, who showed us the way that we ought to go. At the end of about a mile, we fortunately found the turnpike-road; not, indeed at the *foot*, but on the *tip-top* of that very Hindhead, on which I had so repeatedly *vowed* I would not go! We came out on the turnpike some hundred yards on the Liphook-side of the buildings called *the Hut*; so that we had the whole of *three miles of hill to come down at not much better than a foot pace*, with a good pelting rain at our backs.—It is odd enough how differently one is affected by the same sight, under different circumstances. At the “*Holly-Bush*” at Headley there was a room full of fellows in white smock frocks, drinking and smoking and talking, and I, who was then dry and warm, *moralized* within myself on their *folly* in spending their time in such a way. But, when I got down from

Hindhead to the public-house at Road-Lane, with my skin soaking and my teeth chattering, I thought just such another group, whom I saw through the window sitting round a good fire with pipes in their mouths, the *wisest assembly* I had ever set my eyes on. A real *Collective Wisdom*. And, I most solemnly declare, that I felt a greater veneration for them than I have ever felt even for the *Privy Council*, notwithstanding the Right Honourable Charles Wynn and the Right Honourable Sir John Sinclair belong to the latter.—It was now but a step to my friend’s house, where a good fire and a change of clothes soon put all to rights, save and except the *having come over Hindhead after all my resolutions*. This mortifying circumstance; this having been *beaten*, lost the guide the *three shillings* that I had agreed to give him. “Either,” said I, “you did not know the way well, or you did: if the former, it was dishonest in you to undertake to guide me: if the latter, you have wilfully led me miles out of my way.” He grumbled; but off he went. He certainly deserved nothing; for he did not know the way, and he prevented some other man from earning and receiving

the money. But, had he not caused me to *get upon Hindhead*, he would have had the three shillings. I had, at one time, got my hand in my pocket; but the thought of having been *beaten* pulled it out again.—Thus ended the most interesting day, as far as I know, that I ever passed in all my life. Hawkley hangers, promontories, and stone-roads will always come into my mind when I see, or hear of, picturesque views. I forgot to mention, that, in going from Hawkley to Greatham, the man, who went to show me the way, told me, at a certain fork, "that road goes to *Selburne*." This put me in mind of a book, which was once recommended to me, but which I never saw, entitled. "*The History and Antiquities of Selburne*," (or something of that sort) written, I think, by a parson of the name of *White*, brother of Mr. *White*, so long a Bookseller in Fleet-street. This parson had, I think, the Living of the parish of *Selburne*. The book was mentioned to me as a work of great curiosity and interest. But, at that time, the **THING** was biting *so very sharply* that one had no attention to bestow on antiquarian researches. Wheat at 39s. a quarter and South-Down ewes at 12s. 6d. have so

weakened the **THING'S** jaws and so filed down its teeth, that I shall now certainly read this book if I can get it. By-the-bye, if *all the parsons* had, for the last thirty years, employed their leisure time in writing the histories of their several parishes, instead of living, as many of them have, engaged in pursuits that I need not here name, neither their situation nor that of their flocks would, perhaps, have been the worse for it at this day.

Nov. 25. Thursley (Surrey.) In looking back into Hampshire, I see with pleasure the farmers bestirring themselves to get a *County-Meeting* called. There were, I was told, nearly *five hundred names* to a Requisition, and those all of landowners or occupiers.—Precisely what they mean to *petition for* I do not know; but (and now I address myself to you, Mr. CANNING) if they do not petition for a *Reform of the Parliament*, they will do worse than nothing. You, Sir, have often told us, that the **HOUSE**, however got together, "*works well*." Now, as I said in 1817, just before I went to America to get out of the reach of our friend, the *Old Doctor*, and to use my *long arm*; as I said then in a Letter addressed to Lord Grosvenor, so I

say now, show me the *inexpediency* of reform, and I will hold my tongue. Show us, prove to us, that the House “*works well*,” and I, for my part, give the matter up. It is not the *construction* or the *motions* of a machine that I ever look at: all I look after is *the effect*. When, indeed, I find that the effect is deficient or evil, I look to the construction. And, as I now see, and have for many years seen, *evil effect*, I seek a remedy in an *alteration in the machine*.—There is now nobody; no, not a single man, out of the regions of Whitehall, who will pretend, that the country can, without the risk of some great and terrible convulsion, go on, even for twelve months longer, unless there be *a great change of some sort* in the mode of managing the public affairs.—Could you see and hear what I have seen and heard during this Rural Ride, you would no longer say, that the House “*works well*.” Mrs. Canning and your children are dear to you; but, Sir, not more dear than are to them the wives and children of, perhaps, *two hundred thousand men*, who, by the Acts of this same House, see those wives and children doomed to beggary, and to beggary too, never thought of, never regarded as

more likely than a blowing up of the earth or a falling of the sun. It was reserved for this “*working-well*” House to make the fire-sides of farmers scenes of gloom. These fire-sides, in which I have always so delighted, I now approach with pain. I was, not long ago, sitting round the fire with as worthy and as industrious a man as all England contains. There was his son, about 19 years of age; two daughters, from 15 to 18; and a little boy sitting on the father’s knee. I knew, but not from him, that there was *a mortgage* on his farm. I was anxious to induce him *to sell without delay*. With this view I, in an hypothetical and round-about way, approached *his case*; and, at last, I came to *final consequences*. The deep and deeper gloom on a countenance, once so cheerful, told me what was passing in his breast, when, turning away my looks in order to seem not to perceive the effect of my words, I saw the eyes of his wife *full of tears*. She had *made the application*; and there were her children before her!—And, am I to be *banished for life* if I express what I felt upon this occasion! And, does this House, then, “*work well?*” How many men, of the most industrious, the most

upright, the most exemplary, upon the face of the earth, have been, by this one Act of this House, driven to despair, ending in madness or self-murder, or both ! Nay, how many scores ! And, yet, are we to be banished for life, if we endeavour to show, that this House does not "*work well !*"—However, banish or banish not, these facts are notorious : *the House* made all the *Loans* which constitute the Debt : *the House* contracted for the Dead Weight : *the House* put a stop to gold-payments in 1797 : *the House* unanimously passed Peel's Bill.—Here are *all* the causes of the ruin, the misery, the anguish, the despair and the madness and self-murders. Here they are *all*. They have all been *acts of this House* ; and yet, we are to be banished if we say, in words suitable to the subject, that this House does not "*work well !*"—This one Act, I mean this *Banishment Act*, would be enough with posterity, to characterize this House. When they read (and can believe what they read) that it actually passed a law to *banish for life* any one who should write, print, or publish any thing having a **TENDENCY** to bring it into **CONTEMPT** : when posterity shall read this, and believe it, they will want nothing

more to enable them to say *what sort of an assembly it was !* It was delightful, too, that they should pass this law just after they had passed *Peel's Bill !* Oh, God ! thou art *just !*—As to *reform*, it *must come*. Let what else will happen, it *must come*. Whether before, or after, all the estates be transferred, I cannot say. But, this I know very well ; that the later it come, the *deeper* will it go.—I shall, of course, go on remarking, as occasion offers, upon what is done by and said in this present House ; but, I know that it can do nothing efficient for the relief of the country.—I have seen some men of late, who seem to think, that even a *reform*, enacted, or begun, by *this House*, would be an evil ; and that it would be better to *let the whole thing go on*, and produce its *natural consequence*. I am not of this opinion : I am for a *reform as soon as possible*, even though it be not, at first, precisely what I could wish ; because, if the debt blew up *before* the *reform take place*, confusion and uproar there must be ; and, I do not want to see confusion and uproar. I am for a *reform of some sort*, and *soon* ; but, when I say of *some sort*, I do not mean of Lord John Russell's sort : I do not mean a *reform in*

the Lopez way. In short, what I want, is to see the *men* changed. I want to see *other men* in the House ; and, as to *who* those other men should be, I really should not be very nice. I have seen the Tierneys, the Bankeses, the Wilberforces, the Michael Angelo Taylors, the Lambs, the Lowthers, the Davis Giddies, the Sir John Sebrights, the Sir Francis Burdettts, the Hobhouses, old or young, Whitbreads the same, the Lord Johns and the Lord Williams and the Lord Henries and the Lord Charleses, and, in short, all *the whole family* ; I have seen them all there, all the same faces and names, all my lifetime ; I see that neither adjournment nor prorogation nor dissolution makes any change in *the men* ; and, caprice let it be if you like, I want to see a change *in the men*. These have done enough in all conscience ; or, at least, they have done enough to satisfy me. I want to see some fresh faces, and to hear a change of some sort or other in the sounds. A “*hear, hear,*” coming everlasting-ly from the same mouths, is what I, for my part, am tired of.— I am aware that this is not what the “*great reformers*” in the House mean. They mean, on the contrary, no such thing as a

change of men. They mean that *Lopez* should sit there for ever ; or, at least, till succeeded by a legitimate heir. I believe that Sir Francis Burdett, for instance, has not the smallest idea of an Act of Parliament ever being made without his assistance, if he chooses to assist, which is not very frequently the case. I believe that he looks upon a seat in the House as being his property ; and that the other seat is, and ought to be, held as a sort of leasehold or copyhold under him. My idea of reform, therefore ; my change of faces and of names and of sounds, will appear quite horrible to him. However, I think the nation begins to be very much of my way of thinking ; and this I am very sure of, that we shall never see that change in the management of affairs, which we most of us want to see, unless there be a pretty complete change of men.—Some people will blame me for speaking out so broadly upon this subject. But I think it the best way to disguise nothing ; to do what is *right* ; to be sincere ; and to let come what will.

Nov. 26 to 28. Godalming.—I came here to meet my son, who was to return to London when we had done our business.—The turnips are pretty good all over the

country, except upon the very thin soils on the chalk. At Thursley they are very good, and so they are upon all these nice light and good lands round about Godalming.—This is a very pretty country. You see few prettier spots than this. The chain of little hills that run along to the South and South-East of Godalming, and the soil, which is a good loam upon a sand-stone bottom, run down on the South side, into what is called the *Weald*. This *Weald* is a bed of clay, in which nothing grows well but oak trees. It is first the *Weald* of Surrey and then the *Weald* of Sussex. It runs along on the South of Dorking, Reigate, Betchingley, Godstone, and then winds away down into Kent. In no part of it, as far as I have observed, do the oaks grow finer than between the sand hill on the South of Godstone and a place called Fellbridge where the county of Surrey terminates on the road to East Grinstead.—At Godalming we heard some account of a lawsuit between Mr. *Holme Sumner* and his tenant, Mr. *Nash*; but the particulars I must reserve till I have them in black and white.—In all parts of the country, I hear of landlords that begin to *squeak*, which is a certain proof that they

begin to feel the bottom of their tenants' pockets. No man can pay rent; I mean any rent at all, except out of capital; or, except under some peculiar circumstances, such as having a farm near a spot where the fund-holders are building houses. When I was in Hampshire, I heard of terrible breakings up in the *Isle of Wight*. They say, that the *general rout* is very near at hand there. I heard of one farmer, who held a farm at seven hundred pounds a-year, who paid his rent annually and punctually, who had, of course, seven hundred pounds to pay to his landlord last Michaelmas; but who, before Michaelmas came, thrashed out and sold (the harvest being so early) the whole of his corn; sold off his stock, bit by bit; got the very goods out of his house, leaving only a bed and some trifling things; *sailed with a fair wind over to France with his family*; put his mother-in-law into the house to keep possession of the house and farm, and to prevent the landlord from entering upon the land for a year or better, *unless he would pay to the mother-in-law a certain sum of money!* Doubtless the landlord had already sucked away about three or four times seven hundred pounds from this farmer.

He would not be able to enter upon his farm without a process that would cost him some money, and without the farm being pretty well stocked with thistles and docks, and perhaps laid half to common. Farmers *on the coast* opposite France are not so *firmly bounden* as those in the interior. Some hundreds of these will have carried their allegiance, their capital, (what they have left) and their skill, to go and grease the fat sow, our old friends the Bourbons. I hear of a sharp, greedy, hungry shark of a landlord, who says that "*some law must be passed*;" that "*Parliament must do something*, to prevent this!" There is a pretty fool for you! There is a great jackass (I beg the real jackass's pardon) to imagine that the people at Westminster can do any thing to prevent the French from suffering people to come with their money to settle in France! This fool does not know, perhaps, that there are Members of Parliament that live in France more than they do in England. I have heard of one, who not only lives there, but carries on vineyards there, and is never absent from them, except when he comes over "*to attend to his duties in Parliament*." He perhaps sells his wine at the same time, and that being *genuine*, doubt-

less brings him a good price; so that the occupations harmonize together very well. The Isle of Wight must be rather peculiarly distressed; for it was the scene of monstrous expenditure. When the *pure Whigs* were in power, in 1806, it was proved to them and to the Parliament, that in several instances, *a barn* in the Isle of Wight was rented by the "*envy of surrounding nations*" *for more money than the rest of the whole farm!* These barns were wanted as *barracks*; and, indeed, such things were carried on in that Island as never could have been carried on under any thing that was not absolutely "*the admiration of the world*." These sweet pickings, caused, doubtless, a great rise in the rent of the farms; so that, in this Island, there is not only the depression of price, and a greater depression than any where else, but also the loss of the pickings, and these together leave the tenants but this simple choice; *beggary* or *flight*; and as most of them have had a pretty deal of capital, and will be likely to have some left as yet, they will, as they perceive the danger, naturally flee for succour to the Bourbons. This is, indeed, something new in the History of English Agriculture;

and were not Mr. Canning so positive to the contrary, one would almost imagine that the thing which has produced it does not *work so very well*. However, that gentleman seems resolved to prevent us, by his *King of Bohemia* and his two *Red Lions*, from having any change in this thing; and therefore the landlords, in the Isle of Wight, as well as elsewhere, must make the best of the matter.

Nov. 29.—Went on to Guilford, where I slept.—Every body that has been from Godalming to Guilford, knows, that there is hardly another such a pretty four miles in all England. The road is good; the soil is good; the houses are neat; the people are neat; the hills, the woods, the meadows, all are beautiful. Nothing wild and bold, to be sure: but exceedingly pretty; and it is almost impossible to ride along these four miles without feelings of pleasure though you have rain for your companion, as it happened to be with me.

Nov. 30.—*Dorking*.—I came over the high hill on the South of Guilford, and came down to *Chilworth*, and up the valley to *Albury*. I noticed, in my first Rural Ride, this beautiful valley, its hangers, its meadows, its hop-

gardens, and its ponds. This valley of Chilworth has great variety, and is very pretty; but after seeing *Hawley*, every other place loses in point of beauty and interest.—This pretty valley of Chilworth has a run of water which comes out of the high hills, and which, occasionally, spreads into a pond; so that there is in fact a series of ponds connected by this run of water. This valley, which seems to have been created by a bountiful providence, as one of the choicest retreats of man; which seems formed for a scene of innocence and happiness, has been, by ungrateful man, so perverted as to make it instrumental in effecting two of the most damnable of purposes; in carrying into execution two of the most damnable inventions that ever sprang from the minds of man under the influence of the devil; namely, the making of *gunpowder* and of *Bank-notes*! Here, in this tranquil spot, where the nightingales are to be heard earlier and later in the year than in any other part of England; where the first bursting of the buds is seen in Spring, where no rigour of seasons can ever be felt; where every thing seems formed for precluding the very thought of wickedness: here has the devil fixed on as one

of the seats of his grand manufactory ; and perverse and ungrateful man, not only lends him his aid, but lends it cheerfully ! As to the gunpowder indeed, we might get over that. In some cases that may be innocently, and, when it sends the lead at the hordes that support a tyrant, meritoriously employed. The alders and the willows, therefore, one can see, without so much regret, turned into powder by the waters of this valley ; but, the *Bank-notes* ! To think that the springs which God has commanded to flow from the sides of these happy hills, for the comfort and the delight of man ; to think that these springs should be perverted into means of spreading misery over a whole nation ; and that, too, under the base and hypocritical pretence of promoting its *credit* and maintaining its *honour* and its *faith* !—There was one circumstance, indeed, that served to mitigate the melancholy excited by these reflections ; namely, that a part of these springs have, at times, assisted in turning rags into *Registers* !—Somewhat cheered by the thought of this, but, still, in a more melancholy mood than I had been for a long while, I rode on with my friend towards *Albury*, up the valley, the sand-hills on one side of us and

the chalk-hills on the other.—*Albury* is a little village consisting of a few houses, with a large house or two near it. At the end of the village we came to a park, which is the residence of Mr. *Drummond*.—Having heard a great deal of this park, and of the gardens, I wished very much to see them. My way to Dorking lay through *Shire*, and it went along on the outside of the park. I guessed, as the Yankees say, that there must be a way *through* the park to *Shire* ; and I fell upon the scheme of going into the park as far as Mr. *Drummond*'s house, and then asking his leave to go out at the other end of it. This scheme, though pretty bare-faced, succeeded very well. It is true that I was aware that I had not a *Norman* to deal with ; or, I should not have ventured upon the experiment.—I sent in word that, having got into the park, I should be exceedingly obliged to Mr. *Drummond* if he would let me go out of it on the side next to *Shire*. He not only granted this request, but, in the most obliging manner, permitted us to ride all about the park, and to see his gardens, which, without any exception, are, to my fancy, the prettiest in England ; that is to say, that I ever saw in England.

They say that these gardens were laid out for one of the *Howards*, in the reign of Charles the Second, by Mr. EVELYN, who wrote the *Sylva*. The mansion-house, which is by no means magnificent, stands on a little flat by the side of the parish church, having a steep, but not lofty, hill rising up on the south side of it. It looks right across the gardens, which lie on the slope of a hill which runs along at about a quarter of a mile distant from the front of the house. The gardens, of course, lie facing the south. At the back of them under the hill is a high wall; and there is also a wall at each end, running from north to south. Between the house and the gardens there is a very beautiful run of water, with a sort of little wild narrow sedgy meadow. The gardens are separated from this by a hedge, running along from east to west. From this hedge there go up the hill, at right angles, several other hedges, which divide the land here into distinct gardens, or orchards. Along at the top of these there goes a yew hedge, or, rather, a row of small yew trees, the trunks of which are bare for about eight or ten feet high, and the tops of which form one solid head of about ten feet high, while the

bottom branches come out on each side of the row about eight feet horizontally. This hedge, or row, is *a quarter of a mile long*. There is a nice hard sand-road under this species of umbrella; and, summer and winter, here is a most delightful walk! Behind this row of yews, there is a space, or garden (a quarter of a mile long you will observe) about thirty or forty feet wide as nearly as I can recollect. At the back of this garden, and facing the yew-tree row is a wall probably ten feet high, which forms the breastwork of a *terrace*; and it is this terrace which is the most beautiful thing that I ever saw in the gardening way. It is a quarter of a mile long, and, I believe, between thirty and forty feet wide; of the finest green sward, and as level as a die.—The wall, along at the back of this terrace, stands close against the hill, which you see with the trees and underwood upon it rising above the wall. So that here is the finest spot for fruit trees that can possibly be imagined. At both ends of this garden the trees in the park are lofty, and there are a pretty many of them. The hills on the south side of the mansion-house are covered with lofty trees, chiefly beeches

and chesnut; so that, a warmer, a more sheltered, spot than this, it seems to be impossible to imagine. Observe too, how judicious it was to plant the row of yew trees at the distance which I have described from the wall which forms the breastwork of the terrace; that wall, as well as the wall at the back of the terrace, are covered with fruit trees, and the yew tree row is just high enough to defend the former from winds, without injuring it by its shade. In the middle of the wall at the back of the terrace, there is a recess, about thirty feet in front and twenty feet deep, and here is a *basin*, into which rises a spring coming out of the hill. The overflowings of this basin go under the terrace and down across the garden into the rivulet below. So that here is water at the top, across the middle, and along at the bottom of this garden. Take it altogether, this, certainly, is the prettiest garden that I ever beheld. There was taste and sound judgment at every step in the laying out of this place. Every where utility and convenience is combined with beauty. The terrace is by far the finest thing of the sort that I ever saw, and the whole thing altogether is a great compliment to the taste of the times in which it was formed. I know there are some ill-natured persons who will say, that I want a revolution that would turn Mr. Drummond out of this place and put me into it. Such persons will hardly believe me, but upon my word I do not. From every thing that I hear, Mr. Drummond is very worthy of possessing it himself, seeing that he is famed for his justice and his kindness to

wards the labouring classes, who, God knows, have very few friends amongst the rich. If what I have heard be true, Mr. Drummond is singularly good in this way; for, instead of hunting down an unfortunate creature who has exposed himself to the lash of the law; instead of regarding a crime committed as proof of an inherent disposition to commit crime; instead of rendering the poor creatures desperate by this species of *proscription*, and forcing them on to the *gallows*, merely because they have once merited the *Bridewell*; instead of this, which is the common practice throughout the country, he rather seeks for such unfortunate creatures to take them into his employ, and thus to reclaim them, and to make them repent of their former courses. If this be true, and I am credibly informed that it is, I know of no man in England so worthy of his estate. There may be others, to act in like manner; but I neither know nor have heard of any other. I had, indeed, heard of this, at Arlesford in Hampshire; and to say the truth, it was this circumstance, and this alone, which induced me to ask the favour of Mr. Drummond to go through his park:— But besides that Mr. Drummond is very worthy of his estate, what chance should I have of getting it if it came to a *scramble*? There are others, who like pretty gardens, as well as I; and if the question were to be decided according to the law of the strongest; or as the French call it, by the *droit du plus fort*, my chance would be but a very poor one. The truth is, that you hear nothing but *fools* talk about revo-

lations made for the purpose of getting possession of people's property. They never have their spring in any such motives. They are caused by Governments themselves; and though they do sometimes cause a new distribution of property to a certain extent, there never was, perhaps, one single man in this world that had any thing to do, worth speaking of, in the causing of a revolution, that did it with any such view.—But, what a strange thing it is, that there should be men at this time to fear *the loss of estates* as the consequence of a convulsive revolution: at this time, when the estates are actually passing away from the owners before their eyes, and that too, in consequence of measures which have been adopted for what has been called the *preservation of property*, against the designs of Jacobins and Radicals! Mr. Drummond has, I dare say, the means of preventing his estate from being actually taken away from him; but, I am quite certain that that estate, except as a place to live at, is not worth to him, at this moment, one single farthing. What could a revolution do for him *more* than this? If one could suppose the power of doing what they like placed in the hands of the labouring classes; if one could suppose such a thing as this, which never was yet seen; if one could suppose any thing so monstrous as that of a revolution that would leave no public authority anywhere; even in such a case, it is against nature to suppose, that the people would come and turn him out of his house and leave him without food; and yet that they must do, to make him, as a

landholder, worse off than he is; or, at least, worse off than he must be in a very short time.—I saw, in the gardens at Albury Park, what I never saw before in all my life; that is, some plants of the *American Cranberry*. I never saw them in America; for there they grow in those swamps, into which I never happened to go at the time of their bearing fruit. I may have seen the plant, but I do not know that I ever did. Here it not only grows, but bears; and, there are still some cranberries on the plants now. I tasted them, and they appeared to me to have just the same taste as those in America. They grew in a long bed near the stream of water which I have spoken about, and therefore it is clear that they may be cultivated with great ease in this country. The road through *Shire* along to Dorking, runs up the valley between the chalk-hills and the sand-hills; the chalk to our left and the sand to our right. This is called the *Holme Dale*. It begins at Reigate and terminates at Shalford Common down below Chilworth.

Dec. 1. *Reigate*.—I set off this morning with an intention to go across the Weald to *Worth*; but, the red rising of the sun and the other appearances of the morning admonished me to keep upon *high ground*; so I crossed the *Mole*, went along under *Box-Hill*, through *Betchworth* and *Buckland*, and got to this place just at the beginning of a day of as heavy rain, and as boisterous wind, as, I think, I have ever known in England. In one rotten borough, one of the most rotten too, and with another still more rotten *up upon the hill*, in

REIGATE, and CLOSE BY GATTON, how can I help reflecting, how can my mind be otherwise than filled with reflections on the marvellous deeds of the Collective Wisdom of the nation! At present, however, (for I want to get to bed) I will notice only one of those deeds, and that one yet "*incohete*," a word, which Mr. Canning seems to have coined for the *nonce* (which is not a coined word), when Lord Castlereagh (who cut his throat the other day) was accused of making a *swap*, as the horse-jockeys call it, of a *writer-ship* against a *seat*. It is *barter*, *truck*, *change*, *dicker*, as the Yankees call it, but as our horse-jockeys call it, *swap*, or *chop*. The case was this: the *chop* had *been begun*; it had been entered on; but had not been completed; just as two jockeys may have *agreed* on a *chop*, and yet not actually *delivered* the horses to one another. Therefore, Mr. Canning said that the act was *incohete*, which means, without cohesion, without consequence. Whereupon, the House entered on its Journals a solemn resolution, that it was its duty to *watch over its purity with the greatest care*; but that the said act being "*incohete*," the House did not think it necessary to proceed any farther in the matter!—It unfortunately happened, however, that, in a very few days afterwards, that is to say, on the memorable eleventh of June 1809, Mr. Maddocks accused the very same Castlereagh of having actually *sold* and *delivered* a seat to Quintin Dick for *three thousand pounds*. The accuser said he was ready to bring to the bar *proof of the fact*; and he moved that he might

be permitted so to do. Now, then, what did Mr. Canning say? Why he said, that the reformers were *a low degraded crew*, and he called upon the House to *make a stand against democratical encroachment*? And the House did not listen to him surely? Yes, but it did! And it voted, by a thundering majority, that *it would not hear the evidence*! And this vote was, by the leader of the Whigs, justified upon the ground, that the deed complained of by Mr. Maddocks, was according to a practice, which was as *notorious as the sun at noonday*!—So much for the word "*incohete*," which has led me into this long digression. The deed, or achievement, of which I am now about to speak, is, not the *Marriage Act*; for that is *cohete* enough: that has had plenty of *consequences*. It is the *New Turnpike Act*, which, though passed, is, as yet, "*incohete*"; and is not to be *cohete* for some time yet to come. I hope it will become *cohete* during the time that Parliament is sitting, for, otherwise, it will have *cohesion* pretty nearly equal to that of the *Marriage Act*. In the first place, this act makes *chalk* and *lime* every where liable to turnpike duty, which, in many cases, they were not before. This is a monstrous oppression upon the owners and occupiers of *clay lands*; and comes just at the time, too, when they are upon the point, many of them, of being driven out of cultivation, or thrown up to the parish, by other burdens.—But, it is the provision with regard to the *wheels* which will create the greatest injury, distress and confusion. The *wheels* which this law orders

to be used on turnpike roads, on pain of enormous toll, cannot be used on the *cross-roads* throughout more than nine-tenths of the kingdom. To make these roads and the *drove-lanes* (the private roads of farms) fit for the cylindrical wheels described in this Bill, would cost a pound an acre, upon an average, upon all the land in England, and especially in the counties where the land is poorest. It would, in those counties, cost a tenth part of the worth of the fee-simple of the land. And this is enacted, too, at a time, when the wagons, the carts, and all the dead stock of a farm; when the whole is falling into a state of irrepair; when all is actually perishing for want of means in the farmer to keep it in repair! This is the time that the Lord Johns and the Lord Henries and the rest of that honourable body have thought proper to enact that the whole of the farmers in England shall have *new wheels* to their wagons and carts, or, that they shall be punished by the payment of heavier tolls! — It is useless, perhaps, to say any thing about the matter; but, I could not help noticing a thing which has created such a general alarm amongst the farmers in every part of the country where I have recently been.

Dec. 2. *Worth (Sussex.)* — I set off from Reigate this morning, and after a pleasant ride of ten miles, got here to breakfast. — Here, as every where else, the farmers appear to think that their last hour is approaching. — Mr. *Charles B——'s farms*: I believe it is *Sir Charles B——*; and I should be sorry to withhold from him his title, though, being said to

be a very good sort of man, he might, perhaps, be able to shift without it: this gentleman's farms are subject of conversation here. The matter is curious, in itself, and very well worthy of attention, as illustrative of the present state of things. — These farms were, last year, *taken into hand* by the owner. This was stated in the public papers *about a twelvemonth ago*. It was said, that his tenants would not take the farms again at the rent which he wished to have, and that, therefore, he took the farms into hand. These farms lie somewhere down in the west of Sussex. — In the month of *August last* I saw (and I think in one of the Brighton newspapers) a paragraph stating, that Mr. *B——*, who had taken his farms into hand the Michaelmas before, *had already got in his harvest, and that he had had excellent crops!* This was a sort of *bragging* paragraph; and there was an observation added, which implied that the farmers were *great fools* for not having taken the farms! — We now hear that Mr. *B——* has *let his farms*. But, now, mark how he has let them. — The custom in Sussex is this: when a tenant quits a farm, he receives payment, according to valuation, for what are called the *dressings*, the *half-dressings*, for *seeds* and *lays*, and for the growth of underwood in coppices and hedge-rows; for the dung in the yards; and, in short, for whatever he leaves behind him, which, if he had staid, would have been of value to him. The *dressings* and *half-dressings* include, not only the manure that has been recently put into the land, but also the *summer ploughings*; and, in short, every thing

which has been done to the land, and the benefit of which has not been taken out again by the farmer. This is a good custom; because it ensures good tillage to the land. It insures, also, a *fair start* to the new tenant; but then, observe, it requires *some money*, which the new tenant must pay down before he can begin, and therefore this custom presumes a pretty deal of capital to be possessed by farmers. Bearing *these* general remarks in mind, we shall see, in a moment, the case of Mr. B——. If my information be correct, he has let his farms: he has found *tenants* for his farms; but *not tenants to pay him any thing for dressings, half dressings and the rest*. *He was obliged to pay* the out-going tenants for these things. Mind that! *He was obliged to pay them* according to the custom of the country; but he has got nothing of this sort from his in-coming tenants! It must be a poor farm, indeed, where the valuation does not amount to some hundreds of pounds. So that here is a pretty sum sunk by Mr. B——; and yet, even on conditions like these, he has, I dare say, been glad to get his farms off his hands. There can be very little *security* for the payment of rent, where the tenant *pays no in-coming*; but even if he get no rent at all, Mr. B—— has done well to get his farms off his hands. Now, do I wish to insinuate, that Mr. B—— *asked too much* for his farms last year, and that he wished to squeeze the last shilling out of his farmers. By no means. He bears the character of a mild, just, and very considerate man, by no means greedy, but the contrary. A man very much beloved

by his tenants; or, at least, deserving it. But the truth is, *he could not believe it possible*, that his farms were so much fallen in value. He could not believe it possible that his *estate had been taken away from him* by the legerdemain of the Pitt-system, which he had been supporting all his life: so that, he thought, and very naturally, thought, that his old tenants were endeavouring to impose upon him, and therefore resolved to take his farms into hand. Experience has shown him that farms yield no rent, in the hands of the landlord, *at least*; and therefore he has put them into the hands of other people. Mr. B——, like Mr. Western, *has not read the Register*. If he had he would have taken any trifle from his old tenants, rather than let them go. But he surely might have read the speech of his neighbour and friend Mr. Huskisson, made in the House of Commons in 1814, in which that gentleman said, that, with wheat at less than *double the price* that it *bore* before the war, it would be *impossible for any rent at all to be paid*. Mr. B—— might have read this; and he might, having so many opportunities, have asked Mr. Huskisson for an explanation of it. This gentleman is now a great advocate for *national faith*; but may not Mr. B—— ask him, whether there be no faith to be kept with the landlord? However, if I am not deceived, Mr. B—— or Sir Charles B—— (for I really do not know which it is) is a *Member of the Collective*! If this be the case *he has had something to do with the thing himself*; and he must mus-

ter up as much as he can of that “*patience*” which is so strongly recommended by our great new state Doctor, Mr. Canning.—I cannot conclude my remarks on this Rural Ride without noticing the *new sort of language* that I hear every where made use of with regard to the *parsons*, but which language I do not care to repeat. These men may say, that I keep company with none but those who utter “*sedition* and *blasphemy*,” and if they do say so, there is just as much veracity in their words as I believe there to be charity and sincerity in the hearts of the greater part of them. One thing is certain; indeed, two things: the first is, that almost the whole of the persons that I have conversed with are farmers; and the second is, that they are, in this respect, *all of one mind!* It was my intention, at one time, to go along the South of Hampshire to *Portsmouth*, *Fareham*, *Botley*, *Southampton*, and across the *New-Forest* into *Dorsetshire*. My affairs made me turn from *Hambledon* this way; but I had an opportunity of hearing something about the neighbourhood of *Botley*. Take any one considerable circle *where you know every body*, and the condition of that circle will teach you how to judge pretty correctly of the condition of every other part of the country. I asked about the farmers of my old neighbourhood, *one by one*; and the answers I received only tended to confirm me in the opinion, that the whole race will be destroyed; and that a new race will come, and enter upon farms without capital and without stock; be a sort of bailiffs

to the landlords for a while, and then, if this system go on, bailiffs to the Government as trustee for the fundholders.—If the account which I have received of Mr. B——’s new mode of letting be true, here is *one step* further than has been before taken. In all probability the stock upon the farms belongs to him, to be paid for *when the tenant can pay* for it. Who does not see to what this tends? The man must be blind indeed, who cannot see confiscation here; and, can he be much less than blind, if he imagine that relief is to be obtained by the *patience* recommended by Mr. Canning?

Thus, Sir, have I led you about the country. All sorts of things have I talked of, to be sure; but there are very few of these things which have not their interest of one sort or another. At the end of a hundred miles or two of travelling, stopping here and there; talking freely with every body. Hearing what gentlemen, farmers, tradesmen, journeymen, labourers, women, girls, boys, and all have to say; reasoning with some, laughing with others, and observing all that passes; and especially if your manner be such as to remove every kind of reserve from every class; at the end of a tramp like this, you get impressed upon your mind a true picture, not only of the state of the country, but of the state of the people’s minds throughout the country. And, Sir, whether you believe me or not, I have to tell you, that it is my decided opinion, that the people, high and low, with one unanimous voice, except where they live upon the taxes, *impute their calamities*

to the House of Commons. Whether they be right or wrong is not so much the question, in this case. That such is the fact I am certain; and, having no power to make any change myself, I must leave the making or the refusing of the change to those who have the power. I repeat, and with perfect sincerity, that it would give me as much pain as it would give to any man in England, to see a change in the *form of the Government*. With *King, Lords, and Commons*, this nation enjoyed many ages of happiness and of glory. *Without Commons*, my opinion is, it never can again see any thing but misery and shame; and when I say *Commons* I mean *Commons*, and, by *Commons*, I mean, men elected by the free voice of the untitled and unprivileged part of the people, who, in fact as well as in law, are the *Commons* of England.

I am, Sir,
Your most obedient and
Most humble Servant,
Wm. COBBETT.

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POSTSCRIPT TO LETTER IV.

On the "STRICT NEUTRALITY,"
which the hired newspapers now
say our Government is RESOLVED
to adhere to.

[From "The STATESMAN" of
Dec. 7.]

Worth, Sussex, Dec. 6th, 1822.

SIR—That a Postscript should go before the Letter may seem strange; but, what ought to be deemed strange in times when the people die for want of food in consequence of over-production of

food? In the Letter, to which this is a Postscript, I have been catechising you on various points, in order to prepare you for the approaching Session, in which you are to be the grand operator. But, here is a point which will admit of no delay. This "*strict neutrality*" is a thing that I must not suffer, even for a single day, to slip along unnoticed.

The intention of remaining neutral is announced to us by DANIEL STUART, in his paper, the CURIER, of the night before last. DANIEL's words are these:— "We may safely take upon ourselves to assert, that, next to "the wish that Europe should "remain at peace, is the determining of our Government to be "strictly neutral in the war that "appears to be impending." Oh, yes! DANIEL might "safely take upon himself to assert" this; for, I will engage, that the paragraph was sent to him, word for word and letter for letter. And, so, you mean boldly and bravely to maintain a "strict neutrality." Well, then, is not the thing coming to what I have, for years, been saying, that it would come to? Is not this country fast becoming the most contemptible amongst all the nations of the world? What! France invade Spain, and, if she succeed, get the complete sovereignty of that kingdom into her hands; occupy and employ the naval ports and force of Spain! What! an enterprise like this on foot, and England declare herself *neutral*! "France does not attack us." What a paltry excuse! What a base dog should we think the man, who, seeing his wife about to be violated, should say, "it is not

"*me* they are going to ravish, and "I am determined to be strictly "neutral!" Should we not abhor the coward, and particularly for his "*determination*," his, at once, blustering and hypocritical cowardice?

I expect to hear you say; that is, if the invasion take place and if you remain neutral; in this case, I expect to hear you, in answer to reproaches like the above, say, "What! you are the "very men that *blamed us* for not "remaining neutral in 1793; and, "now you blame us for remaining neutral!" This would be very much in the style of the great and the little *red lions*; for the cases are as opposite in their nature as frost and fire are. In 1793, you went to war to prevent the French people from changing their Government and rulers, a government that we had always been taught to regard as a tyranny, and rulers who had always been the foes of England.—This country could be exposed to no danger by the changes in France. We could lose no power and no riches by those changes. In short, we had no business with them. But, in the present case, here are the BOURBONS, our nearest neighbours and most powerful rivals, *marching an army to take possession of the seaports and the fleet of Spain*, and thereby to add enormously to their power of injuring us; especially when we take into view the maritime interests and designs of ALEXANDER, the Autocrat, and JONATHAN, the Republican; of which interests and designs you appear, by-the-bye, to know no more than your youngest baby.

But, though this *red-lion* argu-

ment would be scouted, you have a better to use against those, *who still cling to the Debt*; and, indeed, they have no room for reproach on you for your neutral "*determination*." The *Morning Chronicle*, who, amongst those of this class, is your great accuser, is never *clear and strong* when it comes to the *trying point*. In remarking upon the above paragraph of the *COURIER*, it has these words:—

"The English Government, detested for its gratuitous inhumanity, despised for its folly, consents to look quietly on while the fanatic fires the west, and the plunderer is about to seize his prey in the east. *The motive will not be mistaken.* But as we have already said, the resolution is one to which *they cannot adhere*. This is not the *last of the insults they may prepare themselves for*; and this *proud and powerful nation is not yet accustomed to bear insults patiently*. They will be *forced into war, whether they will or not*. Every blow they receive from the Holy Alliance will be harder to bear than another. I never knew a coward (says the Prince de Ligne) who did not die a violent death at last.—Every one takes courage to insult him, till at last he is forced in despair to turn on his assailants. *A little firmness in due time might have saved the character and honour of the nation, and prevented that sacrifice which has now become inevitable.*"

Now, though it is possible that we may be forced into war, in the end, and, indeed, though it is pretty certain, I do not think there will be war on the part of this nation *while you and your colleagues are in power*, and I think you will be in power to the last moment of the existence of the *present system*. Doubtless the Holy Crew will insult us

enough; and will go on regularly clipping our wings; but, we shall bear it all as long as the system last. Never, as long as Gatton and Old Sarum send Members to Parliament, will England again hold up her head in the world. The nation, unable to endure its degradation, will, probably, at last, by some convulsive movement, break its trammels, and again become what it once was; but, if the system be, by one means or another, prolonged in its existence for only a few years, low, poor, feeble and contemptible indeed will this nation become.

But, the main thing to be considered, at present, is *the Debt*. The *Chronicle* alludes to some sinister motive that you have for determining to be neutral. There needs no hunting about after a motive for *not fighting*, when it is notorious, that you are *unable to fight*. *Capon* and *coward* are synonymous in French; and this nation, with a debt and dead-weight about its neck, is, compared with other nations, what the *capon* is compared with the crowing, sharp-spurred cocks of the yard. I saw a couple of capons the other day, at a farm, under Box-hill. They were great, waddling, dull-eyed things, poking quietly about; while the cocks, though not half the size, were strutting and chuckling and ready for war. Those "blessings," as *Judge BAILEY* called them, a National Debt and our Taxation, have made this nation a capon. They have *disqualified* it for fighting. I remember, that, when the beasts were drunk, and were roasting oxen and sheep at the fall of NAPOLEON, I said, "that " is right. Make the most of it;

" for, it is the *last war* that this " system will ever see."

The *Chronicle* is, therefore, wrong in *imputing motives* to you. You have no more motive than the poor capon has. You cannot fight with the debt and dead-weight hung on to you; and hung on to you they will be as long as Gatton and Old Sarum shall exist in their present glory. However, to answer the *Chronicle*, you have merely to ask him, whether he *wishes the interest of the Debt to go unpaid*. That silences him at once; unless he be able to show, that you can go to war, and pay *the interest of the Debt too*; which would, I believe, be by far the most difficult job that he ever undertook.

It is possible, though, for the sake of human nature, one would fain hope it to be impossible: it is *possible*, that you may resort to the old excuse, pretend to be *angry* with the Spaniards, and say *they deserve* to be invaded, and reduced to subjection. This is the old and tried excuse of cowards, who when justice, when honour, when duty, when nature call on them in vain to defend the weak against the strong, seek a disguise for their baseness in affecting to believe, that the sufferers *deserve* the suffering. The dastard whose horse should receive the lashes aimed at him, and who, pretending anger against the horse, should say, he *deserved* the lashes, would not, however, be more despicable than you would be, were you to offer such an excuse.

No: your strong ground is, the *Debt* and *Gatton*, which must go if you go to war. To those, therefore, who are for *Gatton*,

Downton, Knaresborough, Peterborough, and the like, your answer is short and complete. To those who are for the Debt, your answer is also short and complete. For those only who are for a reduction of the interest of the Debt, and for an assault upon Gatton, have you an answer to provide ; and, if these should be pretty numerous, you will find it no easy matter to furnish an answer, though you have the uncommonly able assistance of the wisdom of the BENTINCKS ! There will be your difficulty ; for this reduction and anti-Gatton party will wonderfully increase as rents fall off ; and they will, at last, plainly ask you, *whether the kingdom be to be actually surrendered to France, rather than touch the Debt and Gatton.* You will then become the puzzled party. You must *answer* this question. You must say, *yes* ; or, you must say, that there are *limits* to the sacrifice to be made to the Debt and Gatton ; and it is at the *defining of those limits* that I should like to catch you. I should like to hear you *describe the point*, at which the sacrifices are to stop.

It is asserted, in the public prints, and very positively, that *"preparations are making at Toulon for the reception of a foreign fleet."* That is to say, as I understand it, of a *friendly* fleet. There are, at this time, so many stories afloat, and there are so many fund-rogues who have an interest in spreading lies abroad, and the Bourbons are, doubtless, working so gloriously on the fund-stuff, that this may be a mere invention. But I should not be surprised to see the *Spanish fleet* safe at Toulon, and I should be less surprised to see a

Russian fleet in that port. Nay, if any aid were still necessary, JONATHAN would, if he saw his way clear, give it ! For, he does not care any thing about *brother republicans*, when the object is a blow at his old enemy. Nor is he at all to blame, for he cannot have forgotten *your despatches*, and Sir JOSEPH YORKE's declaration about *deposing JAMES MADISON* ! "Let them keep their debt and their "boroughs for *ten years longer*, and "there will be *no more right of search.*" This is what they say at Washington ; and, they are perfectly right ; for, by that time, this would become a nation, kicked and cuffed by all the world ! There has long been, and I have often observed on it, a settled design on the part of Russia and America to resist, in case of another war, *our right of search*. Without the exercise of that right, we have no means of carrying on war. It is quite delightful, and even affecting, to see the proofs of the *love* that exists between the Russians and the Americans ; between the Ruler of Poland and the Republican Chiefs of the United States. One might take the picture from *Holy Writ*, except that here it is ALEXANDER and JONATHAN, and not SAUL and JONATHAN. The affection appears to be perfectly mutual ; for you actually see, on the anniversaries of the *4th of July*, the nasty, greasy, stinking Muscovites going arm-in-arm with the Americans in the processions to celebrate the birth-day of *Liberty* ! Both parties are profound hypocrites. They cordially detest and despise each other ; but, they are always looking forward to an union of effort to cut off our right of search,

which is really the right-arm of our power. At this moment, if we could go to war, they are not, perhaps, prepared for this effort. But, while I am not sure, that they are not prepared for it now, I am quite sure, that they must desire to see the *navy of Spain joined to that of France*. This once done, we never could again have war with one of these powers, without having war with the whole of them, unless we surrendered the right of search; and, if we were to do that, we should do well to surrender the island along with it.

Deep then, broad and deep too, is the cup of that humiliation which this nation has to swallow, the Debt and Gatton remaining for only a few years in the plenitude of their power! We now begin to feel the effects of the system. We feel them in all parts and in all manner of ways. The *Chronicle* says, that you will be *unable to remain neutral*; but, he has not shown us why. There is one danger that he appears to have overlooked; and yet it is one of considerable magnitude, and relates to a matter of which he often says a great deal. I mean the power which the Bourbons will have to *draw upon this country by the means of stock-hoaxing and jobbing*. I detest the very name of *funds*; but, a passage, in the *Chronicle* above quoted, is so apt to my purpose, and so strongly tends to confirm an opinion that I offered on the subject about ten days ago, that I cannot refrain from inserting it, great as is the detestation, in which I hold the jargon:—

“Consols for the January account, which closed yesterday at

79*½*, opened this morning at 79*½*, and were speedily run up to 80, on account of the *reported advance which had taken place in Paris*. Some west end of the town brokers, however, created a panic by the extent of their sales, and a decline, more rapid than the advance, was the consequence. They fell to 78*½*, and had an extremely gloomy appearance *until the Bulls rallied their forces*, and by powerful exertions again advanced the value to 79*½* $\frac{1}{2}$. Before the closing of the Stock Exchange, however, the *operations became extremely languid*, and the closing price of the day was 79*½* $\frac{1}{2}$, being about $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. higher than they were yesterday.”

Now, what we gather from this infamous stuff is, that the *mark* is pitched at Paris; that the French Government can raise and sink *our stuff* at their pleasure. The *Chronicle* of the day before told us of many persons who had been *ruined* by these risings and fallings; and, who can doubt that the French have got the money of their ruined fool-rogues? I repeat, that, under the present circumstances, France may, with perfect security, draw eight or ten millions of pounds a year from this country by jobbing in our funds. The tax-gatherers will carry the money to the fund-holders, and the French may, if they will, win a large part of it from these gambling and greedy wretches. I dare say that they have won more within this month than will be required to carry their army half way across Spain. This state of things “in the market” seems to have deprived the fund-crew of their senses. “The fundholders,” says the *Chronicle*, “still cling to the idea, “that war will be prevented. “They trust to the self-interested

" principles of the Holy Alliance, " that they will avoid committing " themselves in a warfare against " the independence of *the human mind*. They also trust " that the Duke of WELLINGTON " will be instructed to make an " effort with the French Government to avert the apparent insanity with which they are at " present possessed; and rumour " farther adds, that *his Grace* " would proceed to Madrid should " he not succeed at Paris."— Downright mad! And, only think of this band of gambling rogues, " trusting that a war will not be " made against the *independence of the human mind*!" Human mind, indeed! What do these vagabonds, who have been the great instruments in the beggaring and starving of the people of England, care, or know, about the *human mind*! We were surprised enough when the *Chronicle* discovered a body of philosophers carrying bayonets and ball-cartridges about them; what, then, must we think of his having made a similar discovery in that hell-upon-earth, 'Change Alley? " His *Grace* " going to Madrid; They are *mad*, Sir; and if they should cut their throats, I, if their friends choose it, will swear for their insanity. " In foreign securities," proceeds the *Chronicle*, " scarcely any transactions " have been effected. One express arrived from Paris, dated " on Sunday evening, but it communicates nothing *satisfactory*. " Many of the holders of Foreign Stocks here seem inclined to " wait calmly for better information, before they effect the ruin " of their families, by the sacrifice " of their property. They still

" hope that justice will not banish " itself from the Councils of Nations, and cling to the distant " prospect that intimidation will " be the only weapon used at present by France against Spain."

What impudence is this! These wretches have lent their money at God knows what interest; and the people of some country or other were to be compelled to pay it out of the fruit of their labour. And these greedy wretches invoke *justice*! The Bourbons promise to do one good thing, at any rate; and that is ruin a pretty considerable band of these merciless sharers. " Their *property*." Impudent vagabonds! They were preying upon the vitals of the people of Spain. The sweat of the people of Spain was to be their " *property*." The labour of the Spanish child in the cradle was mortgaged to them as that of the English child in the cradle long had been. As far as goes to the breaking of this infamous contract, this bond by which the assembly in Spain were enabling the Jews and jobbers in England to hold the Spanish people in slavery; as far as goes to the breaking of this bond, I heartily wish the Bourbons success. Call them *Cortes*, call them *Republicans*, or call them what people choose; who gave them the right to mortgage the labour of Spanish people to Jews and jobbers all over the world? What! begin a government with a debt! Found *Liberty* upon a debt contracted with Jews and jobbers! Mortgage the people's labour to get the means of securing their freedom! This puts one in mind of your and William Lamb's doctrine in 1817, that the greatest recommendation

of Sidmouth's *Power of Imprisonment Bill* was, than it was an additional *security* for our *liberties*! Were it not for the *debt*, such things as this never could have been said. I, therefore, always rejoice at the destruction of any thing and every thing appertaining to debts.

However, the main thing to be observed, in the last quoted passage, is, that every thing, as to the value of funds, turned upon *what was thought at Paris*! This being the case, he who has the power of making people think, at Paris, what he pleases they should think, may get pretty nearly as much as he pleases by jobbing in our funds: I beg pardon; our "*securities*." If I, for instance, can make the funds be at 80 next Saturday, instead of 70, which I shall suppose them now to be at, who is to set bounds to my gains? This the Bourbon Government can do at this time, if it choose; and, that it will choose to do it, and, indeed, has chosen to do it, who can doubt? Suppose the Bourbons to have resolved, at this moment, *not to go to war*. They may keep this resolution to themselves, and spend five or six days in *buying stock of various sorts*. Then out comes their *declaration of peace*, and off they sweep a good million or two sterling. This, and things like this, will be amongst the consequences of your "*strict neutrality*."

Thus, then, here is another proof for Judge BAILEY, that a national Debt is a "*blessing*." He said he did not make the assertion without due reflection. We said, it was the result of *long thinking* upon the subject!—And this came from the *Bench* too! We had frequently heard it from

"*t'other set*;" but, this was the first time that it found its way directly from the Bench. Well, then, Mr. Judge BAILEY, here we are, in the full enjoyment of this great "*blessing*" undiminished! Here we are, and whether we look at home, or look abroad, we see the effects of the "*blessing*." A blessing, however, it really is, though not in the sense meant by Mr. BAILEY. It is a great, a monstrous, evil; but an evil that must eventually produce good. In a letter to Mr. VANSITTART, written in Long Island on the 16th of June, 1817, I said: "Our cause "*[cause of Reform]* is just, and "*our prospects are fair*. The "*hand, which now presses us down, will become feeble*: its "*sinews will be shrivelled*; and "*it will finally become impotent as a straw*. This will take place "*in consequence of those pecuniary concerns of which I have treated in this Letter*; and thus, "*least, the freedom of the country will be restored, and will, I hope, be rendered more perfect than ever, by the very means that have been so earnestly pursued to accomplish its extinction.*"

This was put into print five years ago. Those five years have seen great changes; greater than almost any man could have believed; but, these changes are nothing when compared with those which the *next five years must see*. The revolution in property has made some progress; but what have we seen, compared to that which is coming? Whole districts we shall see untenanted; and laws we must have to provide for the tillage of vacated land. This, or a large indeed reduction of the debt must take place;

and, I say, Sir, for the hundredth time, that the interest of the debt cannot be reduced without putting a stop to *Gatton*, and *Old Sarum*. War, without this, we cannot have; though we may have that state of "*strict*" and happy "*neutrality*," the enjoyment of no one of the delights of which you are envied by,

Sir, Your most humble, and
Most obedient Servant,
WM. COBBETT.

FEAST OF THE GRIDIRON.

A FRIEND has sent me a *sketch for a transparency*, for which I am very much obliged to him. The design is excellent, and so is the execution. Not knowing me personally, he has given me a *nose* that does not belong to me; but this can be easily altered. The rest is all right; and the *owl*, looking so *collectively* wise, and sitting so gravely upon the *rotten* branch, while old Time puts the cap and bells upon her head, agreeably to the prediction in the Register of 5th September, 1819, is most admirable. Should they repeal Peel's Bill; should the Lord Charleses do any thing of this sort; should they reduce the interest of the Debt; should the prediction be fulfilled, up the gridiron will certainly go, and to a certainty this transparency will be placed over it; but let us hope, that for another year or two, at any rate, the thing will be allowed to "*work well*." By that time, we shall see such things as never were seen before,

in this or any other country. I thank my correspondent very sincerely for his present; and shall be happy to see him when I get to town, and when he sees me he will perceive that he must give me another sort of nose. I could look at this *owl* for ever. What a collective look she has! How proud she seems of having the cap and bells put upon her head! She seems to say, "no wonder that I am the envy of surrounding nations and the admiration of the world!"

MARKETS.

Average Prices of CORN throughout ENGLAND, for the week ending 30th November.

Per Quarter.

	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
Wheat	38	9
Rye	20	8
Barley	28	7
Oats	19	7
Beans	26	2
Peas	28	3

Corn Exchange, Mark Lane.

Quantities and Prices of British Corn, &c. sold and delivered in this Market, during the week ended Saturday, 30th November.

Qrt.	£.	s.	d.	s.	d.
Wheat	5,656	for 11,986	4	7	Average, 42
Barley	3,385	5,217	3	6	4
Oats	8,659	9,384	9	6	9
Rye	25	28	15	0	0
Beans	1,934	2,518	18	4	0
Peas	680	1,033	12	1	0

SMITHFIELD, Monday, Dec. 9th.

Per Stone of 8 pounds (alive).

	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
Beef	2	10	to 3	8
Mutton.....	2	8	— 3	4
Veal.....	4	0	— 5	0
Pork.....	3	0	— 4	0
Lamb	0	0	— 0	0
Beasts ...	3,416		Sheep ...	£2,180
Calves	180		Pigs	340

NEWGATE (same day).

Per Stone of 8 pounds (dead).

	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
Beef.....	1	8	2	6
Mutton.....	1	8	2	6
Veal.....	3	0	5	0
Pork.....	2	4	3	8
Lamb	0	0	0	0

City, Dec. 12, 1822.

BACON.

The state of uncertainty in which the Trade are placed with regard to the effects likely to arise from the approaching repeal of the Salt Duty, makes them fearful of engaging any more Bacon from the Irish Manufacturers; especially as all they have hitherto brought this season has lost money. Many expect that the taking off of the Salt Duty will enable the English curers of Bacon to compete with the Irish, on the score of price; and this expectation has caused a further decline in the shipping price from Ireland. 25s. to 27s. are the highest obtainable prices, on board. No Old Bacon selling at present.

BUTTER.

Considerable difficulty has arisen with respect to the affairs of the gentleman whose case we mentioned last week; and apprehensions are entertained that litigation will ensue. From all appearances the Creditors are likely to remain for some time without their money: the stock being of an unsaleable description: and, there being quite Butter enough without it, the stocks in other hands will be disposed of, leaving this to stand

over for next season. As all the Dealers are pretty well supplied, there is very little doing in the wholesale Market.—Carlow, 78s. to 80s.—Belfast, 72s. to 74s.—Dublin, 69s. to 72s.—Waterford, 68s. to 70s.—Cork and Limerick, 67s. to 69s.—Dutch, 86s. to 92s.

CHEESE.

There is a demand for fine Double Gloucester, which is worth from 50s. to 56s. Other kinds are very heavy.—Single Gloucester, 36s. to 46s. New Cheshire, 44s. to 56s.; fine Old Cheshire, 60s. to 70s.

Price of HOPS, per Cwt. in the BOROUGH.

Monday, DEC. 9.—The demand for New Hops is chiefly for good Sussex Pockets and good Kent Bags, and prices may be stated as last currency; in other sorts but little doing. Duty still supposed £198,000.

Maidstone, Dec. 5.—We have now very little doing in the Hop Trade; in fact, there are but few of good quality unsold, and as to middling and inferior sorts, they are hardly to be turned into money. The trade generally very heavy.

Worcester, Nov. 30.—The Hop Trade continues brisk, and the stock remaining in the Market is very small. Prices from 48s. to 65s. per cwt.; and a few very fine samples as high as 72s.—189 pockets of New and 10 of Old were weighed.